

The Story of a Russian Pioneer

THIS is a semi-official, unvarnished, truthful story of the famine conditions in Russia—first hand—written by a man who from September of last year to May of this year gave his entire time and effort to feeding the starving children of the district of Samara, as supervisor for the American Relief Administration.

What he writes in the series of articles beginning to-day is what he actually saw or what came to him in reports from his fellow relief workers. From the bare record of starvation to the shocking reports of cannibalism that in some places followed in its train, the story is based upon official facts.

The writer of the articles is an American. He is the son of the late Gov. Shafroth of Colorado, a graduate of the University of Michigan and California. He served during the war with the 78th Field Artillery. He was a member of the American Relief Administration in Poland and was chosen to head the work in the Samara district.

Article V.

ORGANIZING RELIEF WORK IN SPITE OF DIFFICULTIES.

By Will Shafroth

District Supervisor American Relief Administration, District of Samara from Sept. 15, 1921, to May 15, 1922.

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UK plan of operation was presented to the Government at a meeting of the "Presidium of the Gubispolkom," the Executive committee of the Soviet, which was composed of representatives from the various districts in the province. An objection was made that we were paralleling an already existing organization; that the Government at that time had in every village a

Hunger Committee which could perfectly well perform the functions delegated to our committee, and that the transport organs of the Government were exactly fitted for distributing the food to these committees.

Our reply that previous experience had shown us that the most effective work could be done by committees composed of ours would be of the intelligent elements in the villages, and that these committees must be directly responsible to us and not to the Government, was received in silence. We further stated that we intended and of necessity would be compelled to use government transportation and storage facilities, to which under the Riga agreement we were entitled, but that all warehouses assigned to us must be under the direct control of our employees, and all carriers transporting our supplies must be responsible directly to us.

At a second meeting, held after the plan had been discussed by the Government before the entire Soviet, a rather decided opposition to our scheme arose. The Governor expressed the opinion that we had no right to organize our own committees and it was only after some rather sharp telegraphic communication with Moscow, for which we were given every facility, that he acknowledged this right was given us by the Riga agreement.

SUSPICION AND LACK OF CONFIDENCE.

Disagreements in those early days were not caused by the Government's opposition to our getting the food out. They were extremely glad to see relief supplies coming, with their own stocks diminishing, and the need increasing. But they were still uncertain as to whether we had come in for purely relief purposes, and feared to give us the free hand we wished to have, in building an organization which they thought might be used as we saw fit. As the Soviet delegate, Max Litvinoff, said during the preliminary negotiations at Riga, there was "suspicion on the one side and lack of confidence on the other."

Our first food train arrived on Sept. 26, and unloading began immediately. Although an office and equipment for it required two weeks before had not yet been properly pro-

vided, the Government began to show alarm that our organization was apparently not yet ready to function.

Our plan called for the appointment of a "Russian director," who would hold the position of an executive under the American District Supervisor, to carry out the policies of the latter. We had agreed that his appointment should be made by the American in charge and confirmed by the local Government.

At our third meeting the Governor notified me that the Soviet approved this feature, and informed me that it was the sense of the Executive Committee that this should be done at once and food distribution started, as our first train had arrived. He then nominated two candidates for the post of Russian director, one of them head of the Government Transport Department and the other head of the Co-operative Societies of the province, which organization had also come under the control of the Government.

UP AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT.

I replied through my interpreter, a construction engineer of great ability and intelligence, that I fully realized the pressing need for speed in getting our food out to the starving children, but that no distribution could be effected except under the control of our own organization, and that up to that time my repeated requests for furniture and equipment for the house and office which had been furnished to us had met only with delays and excuses. I thanked him for the two names which he had submitted to me, and said that, as I had conferred with both the gentlemen, I knew them to be very good men and they would receive due consideration.

His reply to this, delivered rather in the manner of an ultimatum, was that I must choose one of these men before leaving the meeting. For a minute the situation was very tense. The various members of the Executive Committee were sitting around the room, while my interpreter and I had chairs before the desk, behind which the Governor presided. I could see they were all watching very closely the effect this would have on me; but in spite of it, I had difficulty in keeping my temper.

I answered that the choice could not be made then; that after due consideration of these and other possible candidates, the Governor would be notified of my choice and given full opportunity to express his approval or disapproval. This caused rather a stir of surprise as the Government was not used to having its wishes opposed, and the meeting broke up spontaneously.

THE ACTUAL RELIEF WORK BEGUN.

The next days were very anxious ones. Doctor Golder and Gregg had already gone back to Moscow, and two more of our interpreters had been sent to Moscow. The effect of the sight of white bread and cocoa had on these half-starved little beggars was a wonderful thing to see.

In the meanwhile my search for a capable "Russian director" had been rewarded. I had not wished to put a Government man in charge, but organizing the Russian end of our operations, even though he was to work directly under me; but to avoid this I knew I must find a man of capabilities at least equal to those of the two men whose names had been suggested.

After consultation with the Russian of the University, a very intelligent, capable and scholarly man who had

formerly been a professor in the large University at Petrograd and the author of several very learned treatises on the history of the Italian Renaissance; with the foremost doctors in the town, and with several other people of good standing whom I had met, I found the man I wanted.

A CORPS OF INTELLIGENT WORKERS.

Head of the big General Hospital in Samara, a skillful surgeon with good reputation throughout the State, a man of convincing personality and with experience as an executive, Dr. Andrei Vassilievitch Gerasimov was chosen to head the Russian end of our work.

Alexander Vassilievitch Borodin, former inspector in the Government Co-operative organization, a man of most unusual ability and judgment, proved himself invaluable in the future in structing our regional directors. Then there was a lawyer, a Colonel in the Red Army who once had the same rank under the Czar, the former head bookkeeper in the largest bank in Samara, a lady interpreter belonging to one of the oldest and richest families in Samara, a Russian-American who had wandered in from Siberia, and many others. No communists were among them, although political opinions were never asked for or discussed in engaging personnel.

It was rather that the intelligentsia saw in our work a chance to live again and possibly to find some connection with the outside world, and they flocked to us for employment. Many disputes with the Government resulted, as they said we should go to the State Employment Bureau for our personnel, and only a definite interpretation by our Moscow headquarters of a very unambiguous clause in our Riga agreement settled the matter.

AN AMERICAN GIRL PIONEER.

At this time all our efforts were put forth in an endeavor to organize quickly in the villages, and to get our food out as soon as possible to our regional warehouses. The first village kitchen in our province was organized by an American girl, Miss Anna Louise Strong of Portland, Ore. She belonged to the American Society of Friends and had come to Samara on a trip of preliminary investigation, distributing a few supplies at the same time. Her office to help me organize temporarily was gratefully accepted, and she started out for a four days' trip with a local doctor who afterwards became one of our regional directors.

Her courage, absolute forgetfulness of self, willingness to buck up against the most trying physical hardships, and eager desire to be of real help on the Russian "Hunger front" was typical of all those splendid young women belonging to the Quaker Relief unit, most of whom I later learned to know.

For three nights she slept on the floor of peasant huts, and returned with the story of ten committees organized, with kitchens prepared ready to receive food, but no word of her own hardships. Ten days later she developed typhus, and for three months lay in a hospital in Samara.

Our American field inspectors, many and various hardships to contend with. Travelling oftentimes for days in box cars, or bouncing over the rough country roads in Ford's, sleeping at night in peasant huts where to leave the door shut meant suffocation and to open it meant death. Being called shut or never built to open, living on "canned Willie" and tea and bread, seeing everywhere sights of death and starvation—the inspiration which came from the gratitude of the peasants themselves was in many cases all that sustained their courage. Often bitten by venomous diptera all precautions of naphthalene bug powder, or a gasoline spray, and constantly exposed to the epidemic of typhus, which was claiming victims in increasingly large numbers, they kept astonishingly well and cheerful.

ATTACKED BY COSSACK BANDITS.

In the month of November, Carl E. Floete of San Francisco met with an adventure suggestive to us of robber bands and the middle ages. He was with his interpreter had gone down to

the Ouzed or District of Pugatchef, the name of which had recently been changed to Nikolayevsk. Its present title is derived from the fact that a bandit who centuries ago ravaged a good part of the Volga Valley and held it under his sway.

Arrived in Pugatchef, a town of about 10,000, with twelve cars of child-feeding supplies, he had proceeded to unload the food in a suitable warehouse, organized committees, open kitchens and start feeding. The official routine of this work was interrupted rather suddenly one evening by a rumor that an armed band of Cossacks was in the neighborhood, preparing for an attack on the town.

The President of the local Soviet with two of his assistants came to Mr. Floete's room at about 10 o'clock in a very excited state, informing him that there was great danger and that he should prepare for flight. He urged him to get everything in readiness to go, and asked Floete to wait word from the local official.

Three steaming armaments of ten were consumed by Floete, his interpreter and their Russian landlady, before the desire for sleep finally won out, and they retired to their quarters.

When morning came, and a hazy sun was beginning to dispense the disquieting thoughts of the night before, they were suddenly brought back very vividly by a volley apparently fired directly below the window of the room the American was occupying.

Immediately afterward a rifle bombardment commenced, both in the front and rear of the house. One bullet, coming in the window and passing directly over the head of his trembling interpreter, decided Floete to try to stop the fight. In his own words: "Instead of rushing to the window and waving the Riga agreement with the announcement that I was an American, so they could save their bullets for future killings, I took refuge in a stout oak desk built during the old regime."

Even her Uncle Chandler was not entirely oblivious of the fact that some newer ferment was working in the depths of that bottled-up young soul.

But he asked no questions. There were two things which he knew too well for that: one was life in general, and the other was Theodore Hayden in particular.

As for Teddie herself, she was tyrannical and melting and snappy and chummy all at the same time. In her mother's absence she promptly ordered the servants about in a manner which plainly betokened that she intended to be master of her fate in at least one quarter of an otherwise unconquered world.

She ordered silver unpacked and moth-bags be shed and the striped ticking off the furniture and the cars overhauled and the draperies restored and the drive-borders retrimmed and an absurd amount of cut flowers for every room in the house.

But she prowled moodily about that house, resenting its quietness at the same time that she gave orders she was at home to nobody. She tried to read, but her mind wandered, and her old mood went soft and her new groomed sulky. She tried reading, and discovered how unbelievably dull all modern books could be.

She tried motoring and found no interest in maneuvering the old hair-pin curves on two wheels, and found that defying the old speed-traps at sixty miles an hour. Even the greenhouses, when she invaded them, seemed to suggest funeral setpieces and the vanity of all earthly ways.

The very walls that lordly Hayden deemed grew still again, remarkably suggestive of jail walls, and that particular wall which intervened between her own and the adjacent estate of the West family seemed to take on a particularly objectionable coloring.

As for her Uncle Chandler, he punctiliously dressed for dinner, and punctiliously sat at one end of the big dining room table while Teddie just as solemnly sat at the other—though she did once emerge sufficiently from her self-absorption to remark that they looked exactly like two palm trees on the edge of the Sahara.

She at once ventured to ask if Watkins really oughtn't to have a passport when he carried the joint all

GERRY ENGAGED TO A FRUMP?

"W"ELL, that impresses me as an eminently sane and respectable place to want to go to," remarked the old Major as he blinked from one to the other of the odd trio confronting him.

But his eye, for some reason, was on Gerald Rhineland West when he spoke next, though his question, obviously, was addressed to Teddie: "And just when do you want to go, my dear?"

"As soon as you can get away from here," was Teddie's prompt but low-noted reply.

Ceremoniously the old Major held out his crooked right arm and dolorously the girl in the blue-fleck took it. Neither of them spoke until they came to a stop beside the roadster.

"I never intended to speak to Gerry West again as long as I live," announced Teddie, with a combined suddenness and fierceness which made her Uncle Chandler forget his left hip-joint as he climbed into the car beside her.

He patted her knee comprehendingly.

"Under the circumstances, then," he observed as she made the motor whine with an altogether unnecessary jab on the accelerator, "it'll be just as well, Teddiekins, if you don't see him for a week or two!"

Back in the dismal emptiness of the dismal gray studio Gerry and Gunboat Dorgan stood looking at each other. Then Gunboat sighed fraternally and essayed an owl-like wag of the head.

"They're all alike, them women!" he remarked with the sagacity of one who has survived unfair ordeals at the hands of the fair.

Teddie's head was much clearer by the time she had motored out to Tuxedo. Her head was clearer, but the contradictory tides of feeling that eddied about her troubled young heart seemed as muddled up as ever.

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"Are All Men Alike?"

By Arthur Stringer.

AUTHOR OF "THE PRAIRIE WIFE," "THE HOUSE OF INTRIGUE," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY WILL B. JOHNSTONE.

WHO'S WHO IN THE STORY.

THEODORA (TEDDIE) HAYDEN, a "poor little rich girl," seeks "freedom" in Greenwich Village. Her

UNCLE CHANDLER, "the major," before leaving for Hot Springs, goes to see her, telling his old chum

COMMODORE STILLMAN, that she is "too pretty to be running around loose." Her uncle is forced to be satisfied with her independent attitude.

RAOUL UHLAN, a portrait painter, forces his attentions on Teddie and kisses her. To punish him she asks

GUNBOAT DORGAN, a prizefighter, to beat him, which Dorgan does thereupon also kisses her and assumes rights over her roadster, much to the annoyance of

RUBY REAMER, a model, who threatens Teddie with "the law," because Dorgan has apparently thrown her over.

ATTORNEY SHOTWELL, representing Raoul Uhlman, calls to demand \$2500 for his client for the beating. So Teddie calls on

GERRY WEST, one of her own set, a childhood playmate, now a lawyer. She tells her story, whereupon Gerry also kisses her.

LOUIS LIPSELI, a reporter on the Star, is called in by West, who takes steps in spite of Teddie's indignation at being kissed again, to fight her enemies.

Teddie, however, decides to pay Uhlman's call, who arrives just as she hands Shotwell a \$2500 check for Uhlman. The Commodore, overwhelmed with sympathy, kisses her just as Dorgan enters. Explanations follow. The Commodore leaves to telegraph Uncle Chandler to return and Dorgan starts out to get back the check.

GERRY WEST recovers her car, brings it back to her studio and is interrupted in his attempt at love-making when Dorgan drags in Lipsett.

Teddie fiercely repudiates Gerry and announces she is going home, just as Uncle Chandler enters.

"Then why not make a stab at it," ventured the old gentleman who had been so intently studying her averted face, "by telling me what the trouble is?"

"There's really nothing to tell, Uncle Chandler," solemnly asserted the young lady with the moody eyes, drawing the striped ticking of reticence over the broadened injustices of youth.

The old Major tossed away his cigarette. He sat staring at the poor little rich girl in the willow lawn-chair. He stared at her so long and so intently that she finally turned about and looked none too fraternally into his face.

"What are you thinking about?" she asked.

"It's queer I never noticed it before," remarked the old Major, apparently more to himself than to the girl confronting him.

"Noticed what?" asked Teddie.

"Now you're getting a bit like your mother," replied the placid-eyed old gentleman in the armchair, "a bit tamed and trimmed off and ironed out!"

"I won't be!" proclaimed Teddie, with quite unlooked-for passion, as she got up from her chair.

"But how, my dear, are you going to stop it?" asked the still equitable old Major.

"I won't get like that!" reiterated Teddie, looking for all the world like a second Artemisia confronting an army of embattled males. She stood there as though expecting some retort from him. But he said nothing. He merely took out another cigarette, lit it and recovered his morning paper from the grass at his feet. This he proceeded to peruse with studied unconcern, quite ignoring the young Artemisia still glowering at him over the edge of it. Then he looked up with the ghost of a yawn.

"By the way," he said, "the Commodore in town yesterday," observed Teddie's uncle as he leisurely turned a page. "He was telling me a queer thing about young West."

"Indeed!" said Teddie, without moving.

"The Commodore was saying that Gerry's going to marry that Rivers girl," he blandly announced the magnified old scoundrel in immaculate cricketer's flannel.

He waited behind his paper for several seconds. Then he heard a mirthless little laugh. Then he heard the contemptuous ejaculation of "That frump!"

And then he heard quick steps along the marble walk that bisected the terrace.

"Where are you going?" he demanded as he looked up to see Teddie making off with the stride of a Diana.

But Teddie entirely ignored that question. Instead of answering that not unnatural interrogation she was calling sharply out to Watkins: "Tell Parrish I want my car. I want it at once!"

And two minutes later, as the old Major folded up his paper and watched Teddie vanish down the West Drive leaving a scurry of gravel and a residuary cloud of dust above the shrubbery, he sighed audibly, and took out another cigarette, and sat deep in thought.

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("Gerry Goes Way" in To-morrow's Installment.)

the way from her end of the table down to the old Major's end of the table.

And her Uncle Chandler brightened up sufficiently to inquire if he hadn't better order a taxi to run them out to the terrace for coffee, so abnormally cast seemed the distances in that dolorous and empty house.

If the old Major remained suspiciously mopey and long-suffering during these days of trial, it must be acknowledged that he made divers and undivulged trips into the city, whence he returned oddly fortified in spirit and beguilingly abstracted in manner.

The only excursion which brought him obvious displeasure was that when he brought back Teddie a motor-truck loaded down with her studio possessions—which the lady in question solemnly committed to a bonfire on the rear end of the East Drive.

And that afternoon as they sat talking tea and cinnamon-toast on the terrace, he finally found courage to confront the morose-eyed young lady who sat in the high-backed willow chair so moodily tearing an Ophelia rose to pieces.

"Say, Teddie, isn't it about time you were loosening up?" the old Major quietly inquired.

"About what?" demanded Teddie, taking her third slice of cinnamon-toast.

"About that mix-up down in the village."

"It wasn't a mix-up," corrected Teddie.

"Then what was it?"

"It was a revelation."

"A revelation of what?" asked Uncle Chandler, as he put his tea-cup down.

"Of what men are!" asserted Teddie.

"Of course," said the old Major as he took out a chased gold case and meditatively extracted a cigarette. "So let's have it, Teddiekins, look, like and sinker!"

But Teddie shook her head.

"I telegraphed to father," she inappositely remarked.

"Where is Trummie this summer?" her uncle inquired.

"He's still at the Arizona Camp Observatory," explained Teddie.

"Trummie moves so slowly," complained the old Major. "The poor man can't help it, I suppose, trailing that chain of D. S.'s and F. R. S.'s and F. R. G. S.'s around after him!"

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